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PENTHOUSE
December 1983

PENTHOUSE INTERVIEW

FRANK TERPIL

Franks Terpil, a fugitive ex-CIA operative and one of the world's most dangerous and wanted men, is alive and well and living . . . from day to day . . . in luxurious hiding. A former intelligence adviser to deposed Ugandan dictator Idi Amin and to Libyan strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi, Terpil moves incognito through a world that can only be compared to Robert Ludlum's fiction. He has played host to Carlos ("The Jackal") Ramires, he is a consultant to the PLO, he has contacts in more than a dozen foreign intelligence services on both sides of the ideological curtain, and he was the onetime business partner of renegade CIA agent Edwin P. Wilson.

Terpil became a fugitive in September 1980. He fled to Syria to avoid trial on charges stemming from a scheme to sell 10,000 British Sten guns to undercover detectives posing as revolutionaries. Terpil and an associate, Gary Korkala, were both tried in absentia, in New York, and sentenced to fifty-three years in prison with the recommendation that neither man receive parole. That, however, was only one of the charges against Terpil. Other counts against him still outstanding involve the alleged training of terrorists in Libya, the illicit transfer of explosives aboard a commercial airliner, violations of passport laws and the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and solicitation to murder.

Before the indictments came raining down upon him, Terpil was a respected, if somewhat mysterious, man of affairs. Brooklyn-born and -bred, he retired from the CIA in 1971, having spent seven years as a communications technician in the inner sanctum of the U.S. intelligence community. Streetwise and ambitious, he was a natural entrepreneur, with a penchant for big houses, big cars, petite mistresses, and enough servants to keep it all running smoothly. Well-liked, amoral, and superbly well connected, he became a middleman in the international arms bazaar, supplying weapons with silencing devices, binary explosives, poison kits, helicopters, electronic eavesdropping equipment, mili-

tary uniforms, mercenaries, and coups d'état to the highest bidders. It was literally a cutthroat business, and it proved to be a profitable one as well. Within a few years of leaving the CIA, Terpil was a multimillionaire, concealing his wealth through the anonymity of Swiss bank accounts and Liberian fronts while acquiring a Rolls-Royce, a small British hotel, objets d'art, and town houses in Washington, London, and Paris.

In the constellation of conspiracies known collectively as "the Wilson-Terpil case," Terpil remains the only indicted conspirator still at large. Edwin Wilson, lured back to the United States in 1982 by a canny federal prosecutor, proceeds from trial to trial, keeping his mouth shut while accumulating sentences of millenarian proportions. Gary Korkala, arrested in Spain earlier this year, was returned to the United States with the proviso that he would receive a new trial. Others implicated in the case have pleaded guilty to a variety of charges, and some have entered the government's Federal Witness Protection Program, and not a few have died—violently or unexpectedly. Among the last-named: Kevin Mulcahy, the ex-CIA officer whose ad hoc investigation of the case led to Wilson's exposure, was found dead at a motel in West Virginia; Waldo Dubberstein, a top analyst with the Defense Intelligence Agency from whom Wilson allegedly purchased classified information for transmission to Libya, was found dead of a shotgun wound, apparently self-inflicted; and Rafael Villaverde, an anti-Castro Cuban hit man, is presumed dead after an explosion at sea, off the coast of Bermuda.

The importance of the Wilson-Terpil case goes far beyond the particular indictments brought to date. What is at issue is not only the question of who shot whom, and why, but also the pattern of violent criminal activity involving the corruption of public officials in Congress, the military, and the CIA; the sale of secrets and high-technology hardware to avowed enemies of the United States; and the extent to

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